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Berrien County Health Department promotes prevention services during STI Awareness Month

As part of STI Awareness Month, the Berrien County Health Department is shining a spotlight on its prevention services through the Taking Pride in Prevention (TPIP) program and its Sexual Health Clinic.

A Michigan Department of Health and Human Services initiative, TPIP helps young people learn about healthy relationships and sexual health. BCHD administers TPIP locally to equip young people and parents with tools to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies.

"Parents and caregivers play the most important role in guiding children through adolescence," said Miranda Bronicki-Dopp, BCHD's family health program manager. "Through TPIP, we're here to partner with parents and help them feel confident leading 'the talk' about sexual health and prevention."

TPIP provides medically accurate education on both abstinence and contraception for young people ages 12-19. The program emphasizes informed decision-making, personal responsibility and open communication within families. Topics include STI transmission, HIV prevention, consent and building healthy relationships.

In Berrien County, BCHD's TPIP program includes current, medically accurate sexual health information through youth-centered curriculum and educational modules focused on health decision-making. It also offers interactive workshops and resources to support parents and caregivers. For more information about local TPIP programming, email parenting@bchdmi.org.

BCHD's Sexual Health Clinic provides confidential, accessible care for community members both in person and through telehealth. The clinic offers testing, treatment, counseling and preventive care designed to support the community's overall wellbeing.

Services available through the Sexual Health Clinic include:

- Immunizations, including for human papillomavirus.
- Sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment.
- Rapid HIV testing and counseling.
- Expedited partner therapy for individuals whose partners may have been exposed to an STI, helping prevent further spread of infection.

These services are offered at reduced costs compared with many other local providers, and most forms of insurance are accepted. The clinic offers same-day and walk-in appointments for faster results and peace of mind.

"While we're encouraged to see STI case numbers trending downward in Berrien County, our focus remains on prevention," said Dionne Rigozzi, BCHD clinical and community health services supervisor. "Through programs like TPIP and our Sexual Health Clinic, we want to ensure community members have the education, testing and support they need to stay healthy."

Sexual Health Clinic appointments are available 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at BCHD's Benton Harbor office, 2149 E. Napier Ave., and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at its Niles office, 1205 N. Front St. Walk-in services are available 1-4 p.m. Wednesday at both locations. Telehealth appointments are available 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

Community members may request an appointment online or by calling 269-926-7121.

MDHHS offers comprehensive STI testing guidance for sexually active women, men, pregnant individuals, men who have sex with men, gender diverse persons and individuals with HIV. — STAFF REPORTS

HIKERS TO EXPLORE SUGARWOOD FOREST PRESERVE

Those who are looking forward to the sights, sounds and smells of spring can embark on a spring search for early spring ephemerals at Sugarwood Forest Preserve at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 18.

Key species that'll be watched for include Bloodroot, Spring Beauty, Hepatica, Dutchman's Breeches, Trout Lily, and Trillium. Of course, the weather will determine which plants will be in bloom but dutchman's breeches were spotted on our recent hike. Pat Fisher, president of Harbor Country Hikers, will lead the hike and point out some of the woodland "Signs of Spring."

Sugarwood Forest Preserve is a plateau of uplands bisected by deep ravines. The northern portion of the preserve boasts an old-growth beech-maple forest as well as a ravine with a Galien River tributary, a groundwater seep, and a unique plant community. The rest of the wooded uplands are considered mid-successional mesic southern forests in various stages of regrowth after a history of grazing. The southern ravine system contains floodplains with an impressive number of pawpaw trees. The southern corner is a former agricultural field being restored to a native prairie. A mix of field, successional and old growth forests, and beautiful vistas you need to see through every season to fully appreciate.

For more information, including driving directions, visit the Hikers' website, www.harborcountryhikers.org, or its Facebook page.

— STAFF REPORTS

Stop trying to control everything in your life; control your reaction. Inner peace is successful. — *Dino N. Fatouros*

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

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CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
HOWARD MALES, MICHELLE HEIT, MICHELLE HANNON, PATTY IAZZETTO, BARBARA ANDERSON
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 9AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, JENNIFER SUMMERS, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
The Board meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 6PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, ARTHUR ANDERSON
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM
VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER, JACK GRACE, ED SEBASTIAN, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

City to engage township regarding fire protection services

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Based on a consensus of the New Buffalo City Council at a special April 6 meeting, the city will engage New Buffalo Township with regards to moving forward with future fire protection services.

Currently, New Buffalo Township Fire Department has an agreement to respond to every fire call in the city.

Councilmembers were presented with possibilities at the February council meeting, which include contracting services to New Buffalo Township, or cross-training police and other responders.

City Manager Darwin Watson said there's a proposal to contract with New Buffalo Township Fire Department.

Police chief Rich Killips said that, for the last eight years, the city fire department "has not had enough firefighters to adequately do what's needed."

"Every time there's a fire, the police department is there first and sometimes with a fair amount of people – it's very common for, on fire calls, the amount of police officers at that call to outnumber the amount of firefighters," he said.

Killips added that city is a "low crime and low fire call community," which "makes it prime for the potential of the police officers and other city staff being trained to help out as firefighters."

Currently, the city has three firefighters as full time staff and two others who are trained as firefighters but not active ones.

If the city keeps some type of fire department, a "substantial investment" would need to be made to upgrade the equipment.

Killips said his recommendations would be to "boil down the operations of the fire department," keeping a minimal amount of equipment, which would be only two engines. The city would use the value of the ladder truck "to help negotiate with the township for supplemental fire coverage until we can increase the staffing levels of our own fire department," as well as train "willing, existing employees as firefighters" and "train and operate cohesively" with New Buffalo Township Fire.

"If we were able to put together a public safety budget including the lifeguards, inspection services and police and fire department, we could maximize what we do with those dollars," he said.

Saying it was "never my intention to alienate our police department," councilmember Rich Knoll said that, if he went with an estimate that Watson gave regarding what's being recommended by Killips, that cost would be $400,000 to $600,000 annually to operate it and the startup cost would be $250,000 to $350,000.

Members of the police department will have to cross-train on top of their police training, he said.

He said New Buffalo Township is offering, for $200,000, to be the New Buffalo Fire Authority and that they would cover the city's calls, which would include a fire station on each end that's staffed. The city would also sell its ladder truck to them.

The township has also hired three full-time, young firefighters from the area.

"They have firefighters on call already, they have three on every day plus (fire chief) Jamie, so I don't think we'll lose anything as far as calls go there," he said.

Council member Mark Robertson said that he's concerned about losing "all control" of fire services.

He added that getting the city's fire department "up and running" again would enhance the safety of the area, which continues to see an influx of people.

"If we have a chance to get our fire department back to enhance the safety aspect in this area, for me, I don't know why we wouldn't try it," Robertson said.

Mayor Vance Price said that he's concerned with the cost of Killip's proposal, adding that the city's cost for the broadside dock and pedestrian bridge projects have increased since they first applied for grants a few years ago.

If he can fit it into the budget, township fire chief Jamie Flick said he wants to hire another firefighter for Sunday through Saturday, ensuring there'd be some kind of daytime coverage on the weekends.

"This is where we need to go as a township, as a city, as a community that we have to start looking at full-time firefighters – this isn't a volunteer, paid on call model anymore, especially living on an island like we are," he said.

Watson said that a resolution to move forward with the township will be on the floor for the April 20 meeting. The proposed contract would need to be negotiated with the township, which would be voted on by the council and township board.

Council members approved applying for the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy's State High Water and Infrastructure Grant for $450,000, with a 20 percent match.

Per the city packet, the Michigan Legislature "appropriated $14.35 million to EGLE for a grant program to provide infrastructure and planning grants that directly address the impacts and vulnerabilities presented by severe weather events, with a focus on projects that address flooding, coastline erosion, urban heat and stormwater management." If awarded, Watson said this grant would go toward the broadside dock project.

Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience. *— Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Alleged highway vandal arrested

BY STAN MADDUX

Frozen bottles of water were the objects a man allegedly used to strike oncoming vehicles on a stretch of La Porte County highway late last year.

Those are among the new details obtained from the case filed in La Porte Circuit Court against 18-year-old Phillip Duffus.

Duffus is charged with four counts of Level 6 felony criminal recklessness and four counts of criminal mischief, a Class B misdemeanor.

According to court documents, four vehicles were struck on December 13 by frozen water bottles Duffus tossed from an oncoming vehicle on U.S. 421 from 200 North to 1800 South.

One of the victims had to pull over when a frozen water bottle struck his grill, causing the engine and transmission to die.

Police said a major break in the investigation came from surveillance video obtained that night from a store in Westville that showed a vehicle occupied by a man identified as Duffus through a forensic examination of the footage.

Another break came from a shirt the suspect was wearing in the video matching a shirt his father at home in LaCrosse showed investigators, police said.

Police said his father also identified the man in the video as his son.

In another video from the same store, police said a man believed to be Duffus was at the counter with a case of bottled water and three two-liter bottles containing flavored soda.

Duffus told investigators he longer lives with his father but now resides in Gary. He was arrested in Lake County.

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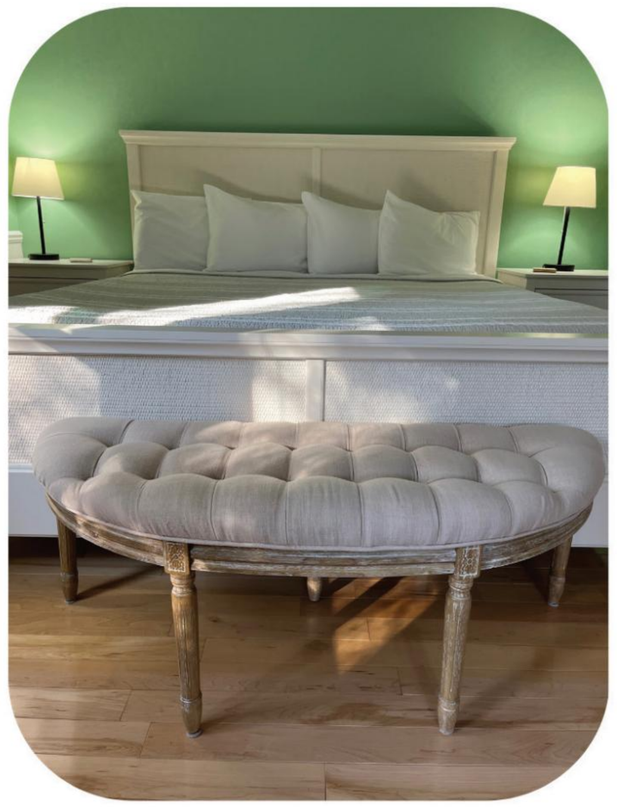
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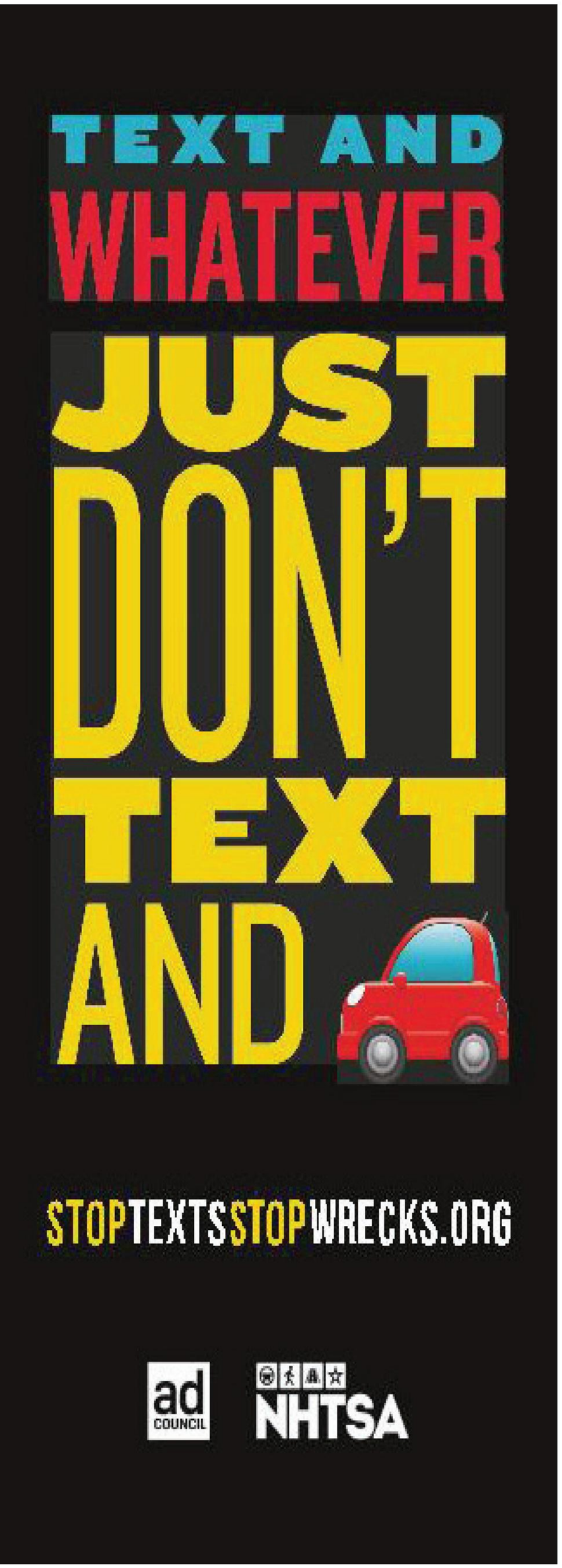

New local nonprofit puts out calls for properties, projects in Southwest Corner of Southwest Michigan

Local economic development professional Dan Buckenmeyer, a passionate advocate for the communities he has lived in for decades, is leading the launch of the Southwest Southwest Michigan Community Land Trust (SWSWCLT).

According to a press release, the "region offers a quality of life that is in very high demand. New Buffalo and its surrounding communities have long provided a haven for second homes and summer tourists."

"In the past, local residents found room to live in harmony with the second homes concentrated near the lake. However, in recent years, a pandemic that drove an influx of new residents combined with the rapid growth of the short-term rental industry has stripped affordable housing stock and driven the hyperinflation of housing prices in our communities," the release states.

"Communities like ours are discovering that they cannot thrive or even survive without making living room for the essential workforce that supports tourism and allows a year-round economy to exist," Buckenmeyer said. "Communities like Martha's Vineyard, Jackson Hole Wyoming, Aspen Colorado, and many areas like ours along the Lake Michigan coast have looked to Community Land Trusts as a solution to provide living room for everyone."

SWSW refers to the Southwest corner of Southwest Michigan, where the nonprofit will focus its efforts. CLT refers to Community Land Trust. The CLT model assists households in bridging the financial gap between the mortgage they can afford and the cost of purchasing a home in the community. In exchange, homeowners agree to pay it forward through a resale formula that keeps the home affordable for future buyers. The homeowner purchases only the home and the CLT maintains ownership of the land. In the event of a future sale SWSWCLT is empowered through a land lease to transfer the property to the next income-qualified household. SWSWCLT homes therefore remain affordable in perpetuity.

"The New Buffalo, Three Oaks, and Chikaming communities are known as safe, welcoming, and desirable places. This reputation is built on the strength of the local workforce, which has seen its housing options increasingly constrained – to the point where it is nearly impossible for many to live in the communities they serve," said Dan Petersen, executive director of The Pokagon Fund, which is providing startup funding for the SWSWCLT. "We see the community land trust as a critical part of addressing this challenge by expanding housing options for the people who work here every day. Ensuring that essential workers like police officers, firefighters, teachers, service industry workers, and others can live and remain fully engaged in these communities is vital to sustaining that character."

The benefits of a CLT go far beyond those people who have the opportunity to purchase the affordable homes SWSWCLT develops. The ripple effect will be seen in better employee retention rates for local employers, a stronger, more stable year-round economy, more successful local businesses, thriving schools, and an enhanced quality of life across all our communities. Even non-CLT neighbors benefit, as studies have shown that CLT homes stabilize and increase nearby property values.

"Success in our mission will of course depend on financial support," said Buckenmeyer. "But every workforce housing project has to start with land, and we are looking for employers, municipalities, developers, and individuals who can support this effort by helping us to locate and acquire the right pieces of land for our first homes."

Buckenmeyer said that there are already conversations taking place, but SWSWCLT is ready for action and eager to build a robust pipeline of potential projects.

"We'd love to hear from anyone interested in working and partnering with us," he said.

The SWSWCLT is a nonprofit, community-based and community-managed organization focused on the development of affordable workforce homes designed to remain forever affordable. The SWSWCLT board is comprised of experienced housing development professionals, and will also include homeowners from the CLT homes, giving them ownership and agency over their communities. SWSWCLT is a part of the SWSW Michigan community of nonprofit initiatives focused on improving the quality of life in our Southwest Southwest Michigan communities through economic and community development, small business support, and other programs.

For more information and to donate or get involved, visit www.swswclt.org. — STAFF REPORTS

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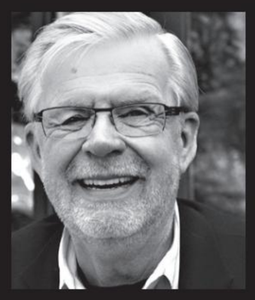

COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

Once again, the NCAA mens basketball tournament took center stage last week.

Going into Saturday when the final four began, Illinois and Michigan from the Big Ten held two of those spots, with Connecticut and Arizona holding the other two. There are 362 division one college basketball teams.

Of those, 68 play well enough during the regular season to be invited to the tournament. After being chosen, the tournament begins. The beginning of the tournament is followed closely, mostly because people fill out their brackets, trying to show their friends, coworkers, or whoever how smart they are.

Most aren't very smart when it comes to college basketball, so the second and third rounds feature a lot of good games, followed closely by those who feel they have a chance to win their brackets, but some who haven't chosen well drop out.

Last weekend, the final four, was watched by almost everyone. I wasn't feeling well, so I had to watch the game at home, but I had planned to go out with about 25 friends to watch the semifinals at a local establishment.

The games themselves were quite entertaining.

Illinois put up a good fight against Connecticut but ended up losing 71-62. The game was close until the end when Illinois had to foul to get the ball back. I didn't know it at the time, but Bill Murray's son is an assistant coach at UConn.

The second game featured two powerhouses, Michigan and Arizona.

The oddsmakers thought it would be a rough, physical game between two evenly matched teams.

They were correct about it being a rough physical game but at least on Saturday night the teams weren't evenly matched. Michigan started off strong and kept it up throughout the game, winning easily 91-73. Michigan made it seem easy, so they are the overwhelming favorite to become national champions.

Next week I'll report on the final game. Michigan is the favorite, but UConn always seems to rise to the occasion. This is the fourth year in a row that they have made it to the final four, but I believe that Michigan is too good for them to beat.

This is some inside newspaper info, but I needed to get my column into the newspaper before Monday night, or I would have talked about the championship game this week.

If you watched the game, I'll give you my impression of the outcome, and if you had to miss it, I'll try to fill you in. Win or lose, the Wolverines had a tremendous season. Their current record is 36-3 and they ended up winning the very difficult big ten championship with a record of 19-1.

Coach Dusty May and his team are playing for it all for the first time since 2018, and they have an excellent chance of winning their second title, the other coming in 1989.

Ernest Hemingway said, "The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them."

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

The most important decision you make is to be in a good mood. — *Voltaire*

Raiders win both games of doubleheader in girls softball

BY STAN MADDUX

The Red Arrow Raiders at home Tuesday swept a double header from Benton Harbor 17-0 and 18-1 in girls' high school softball.

In the first game, the Raiders wasted no time getting on the scoreboard from back-to-back run scoring doubles in the first inning by sophomore Rylee Rudolph and junior Johnna Rochefort.

They were followed by an RBI single from slugger Addison Lynch, a sophomore.

Eight runs before the inning were over crossed the plate for the Raiders, who also had several players score from walks and a number of miscues on defense.

There was no let up for the Raiders in the second inning, which started with Rochefort and Lynch reaching base on an error and walk.

They scored on singles by freshman Ella Lijewski and senior Greta Vollman.

After another fielding error and walk, senior Brianna Taylor hit a run scoring single down the third base line.

The Raiders scored two more runs before the game was called under the Michigan High School Athletic Association's mercy rule after Benton Harbor failed to score in the third inning.

Vollman, who was the starting pitcher, struck out four of the seven batters she faced before replaced by Rudolph, whose trip to the mound was her first one of the season.

Other first game highlights included Rochefort the starting catcher throwing out two runners.

Raiders Head Coach Erick Rochefort said the games were an opportunity for him to put players in different positions so they're ready to fill those spots if injuries occur during the season.

It was also a chance for him put substitute players into the game to get some playing experience.

"That helps in games like this to build confidence. Confidence hitting. Confidence playing defense," he said.

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Raiders off to 3-0 start in high school baseball

BY STAN MADDUX

The Red Arrow Raiders are off to an undefeated start in the first season of baseball under a merger of the programs at New Buffalo and River Valley high schools.

The Raiders on Tuesday swept a double header against Benton Harbor 17-0 and 17-1 at the new baseball field at New Buffalo High School.

The Raiders also won their season opener before spring break last week against Bridgman 9-5.

Head Coach Bryan McCarty believes it could be the start of things to come for what he believes is a team with solid potential despite losing several seniors from last year's squads.

"Everybody has been working hard, so far, and we're looking forward to a great season," he said.

Sophomore Colten Lijewski led off the first game for the Raiders with a crisp single to left field then later scored on a ground ball from senior Nick Wolfe that hopped over the glove of the third baseman.

Senior Cooper Lynch followed with an RBI triple to left field.

Sophomore Brody Nikkel and Justice Rowland then singled before Lijewski with two outs singled again to left field.

More runs crossed the plate on a single by junior Drew Bowen and a throw from the catcher that went over the first baseman's head into right field.

After Wolfe singled, he crossed the plate on another triple to left field by Lynch for the 11th and final run of the inning.

Lijewski was also the starting pitcher, striking out five of the six batters he faced before taken out after the second inning.

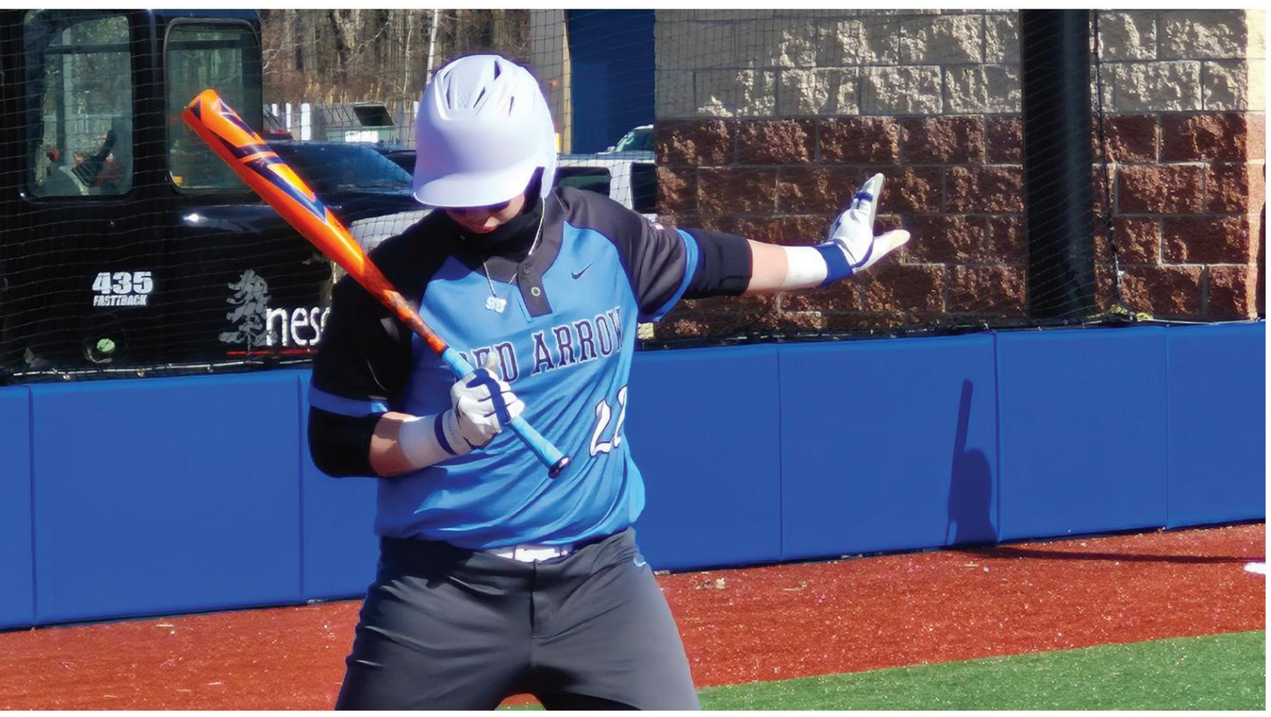
The baseball programs were the last teams to merge under a consolidation brought on a few years ago by declining enrollments.

McCarty said it's too early to know if his team has one particular strength but, so far, he likes the depth of his pitching staff along with the ability of his players to hit the ball and play good defense.

"For us, it's more about playing together as a group," he said.

McCarty said the transition to the Raiders has been easier than he thought it would be with players already displaying the type of chemistry that helps win games.

"We're excited. We're excited," he s



Children, adults, enjoy very rainy egg hunts

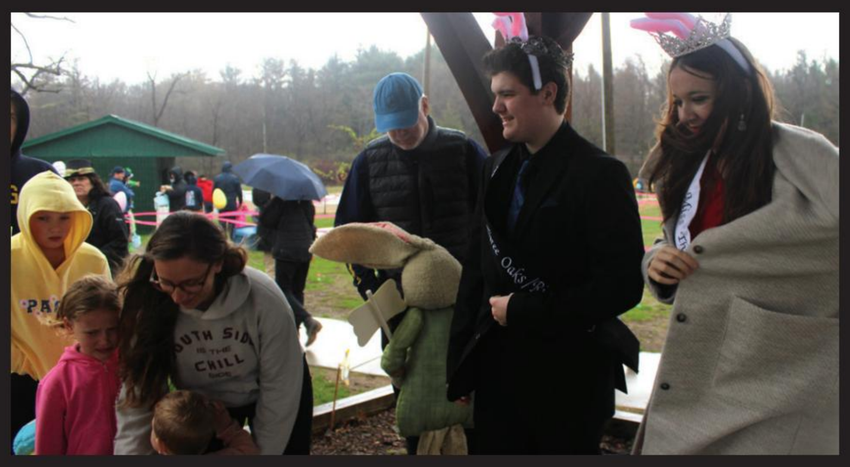
BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

A little rain and abrupt temperature drop didn't deter children and adults from hunting down Easter eggs during two area hunts that were held Saturday, April 4.

Hosted by Chikaming Parks and Recreation at Harbert Community Park in Harbert, the Lakeside Association's annual egg hunt featured children in five different age groups hunting for eggs, with a special category for the adult hunters as well. Sponsored by New Buffalo Business Association and New Buffalo American Legion Post 169, the legion's egg hunt featured children ages 0-12 hunting for eggs, including special prized ones, before enjoying a hot dog lunch.

The youngest hunters find eggs at the Legion

Children check out their Easter eggs in Harbert



Mr. and Miss Three Oaks and River Valley Clayton Burk and Johnna Rochefort greet guests in Harbert

Children meet the Easter bunny at the Legion

Janet Schrader (left) leads children in singing Peter Cottontail

Adults race to find eggs in Harbert

New Buffalo royalty pose with the Easter bunny at the Legion

Lillian and Ellie Stark pose with the Easter bunny in Harbert

Children hunt for eggs at the Legion

The hunt is on in Harbert

From the Dish Pit...

A HIGHSCHOOLER'S TAKE ON REAL LIFE TOPICS

BY SYLVIE DARLING

The Pressure to Plan

As I picked up the empty mugs from her table, I noticed the girl had her head in her hands. Sighing, she hunched over a thick planner and continued highlighting, crossing out, and rewriting. I offered her a small smile that she didn't see and turned around just in time to hear her mutter, "Ughhh, what am I going to do with my life?"

This question followed me around for the next couple of days, in classes and conversations and everyday moments. What am I going to do with my life? For many young individuals, the answer is simple: attend college, pursue a career, and start a family. However, this reliable roadmap eventually becomes a rigid timeline, demanding that teens make crucial life decisions before "it's too late."

In the past, teenagers experienced less pressure to decide on career commitments. In the current age, however, the rigid timeline has left my generation with no time for self-discovery. Instead, we are pressured to pick an occupation from the plethora of career options and fill our teenage years with AP classes, SAT prep, and college applications. If not, we run the risk of "falling behind."

I put this expression in quotations because the definition of "behind" is completely circumstantial. Many young individuals are now taking gap years, switching majors, and getting married much later in life. These fluctuations prove that "behind" and "ahead" look different for each person. And if the end goal is for teens to find a career they enjoy, then shouldn't we leave them time to discover what they enjoy?

Being homeschooled has afforded me this unique opportunity of exploration as I discover how my brain is wired. Math and science have never clicked for me, but writing? There might be something there. Regardless, I still get caught up in the timelines that our society has set. It's the spring of my junior year, after all, and I should be studying for the SAT, touring colleges, and building my college resume. Instead, I am allowing this season of my life to be one of exploration rather than academic preparation. If only the kids in my generation could have the same freedom – to discover who they are and what they want to do. Maybe then they could look at their future with hope instead of dread.

I came across this Mary Oliver quote the other day: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" My mind instantly flew to the girl in our coffee shop, who was tied down to society's timelines. If we remove this pressure from teens, maybe they could start viewing their future as wild and precious. And instead of planning out their lives, they could plan on exploring the beauty in them.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE New Buffalo Times — SINCE 1942 —

A Writer's Life...

DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISION ANIMATION

BY JACK OLESKER

A Fresh Start

Word of Jeff's departure spread, and I could feel staffers looking at me differently. It registered, but it didn't matter to me. All that mattered was writing. And write I did. I was, as I said to Kevin, Seabisquit. In the days and weeks following my meeting with him, Kevin stood aside and let me loose...let me write...unbridled.

Bobby came to terms about my working with Joan Rivers, to the point where he began sharing stories about his time working with her. I was glad, because that eased whatever tension there had been between us.

Having a fresh start, my fingers flew across my keyboard. I pounded out short bios for the Predicaments characters, fleshed out locations, wrote a lengthy treatment and then the teleplay itself, based on the concept we'd received from Mattel.

I don't use the word "pounded" lightly. When I type, I type hard, my fingers literally pounding the keyboard. I type about sixty words per minute but I only use two fingers. When I was sixteen I tried to take a high school summer course in typing. I was a week into it when the instructor urged me to drop the course because "you're never going to be a typist." She was right. I had to settle for being a writer.

Approvals moved forward on greased rails. The teleplay was done, only requiring a short polish. I pulled sides for the auditions and waited to see if Kevin still wanted me to attend the auditions. When he stopped by my office and told me the auditions would start the next day, I was delighted. I wanted to see every step in the production process.

There are a few days you never forget. The first day I showed up on the set for the taping of Predicaments was one. I'd been on television and movie sets before, so I knew what to expect. What I didn't expect was the wave of emotions as I watched camera operators, sound and lighting technicians, make-up artists and hairdressers working non-stop, and actors and background extras prepping to deliver dialog lines from a script I'd labored over.

In the middle of it Joan Rivers was in a director's chair getting her hair and make-up attended to. There was something about her that positively shined. It's what people mean when they say someone has "star power". As I walked toward her, Joan turned and smiled. After I held out my hand and introduced myself, she gushed, complimenting me on the script, saying she was looking forward to taping.

With make-up and hair done, Joan leaped from the chair and I watched as she spent half an hour walking around the set, speaking and joking with everyone, whether they were a director, actor, production crew or 'just' extras. A production assistant told me Joan was among the first people on the set and had been tied up with hair and make-up for over an hour. Now she was eager to speak with everyone on the project.

I met WKRP's Gordon Jump and Rowan & Martin's Laugh-in comedian Arte Johnson. They were consummate professionals but, no disrespect intended, they weren't in the same galaxy as Joan Rivers. I liked her galaxy. I liked being in it with her. I wanted more of it. But before I would know it, the taping would be finished and I'd have to wait a whole two years before I entered Joan River's galaxy again.

And what a story that is...

HOROSCOPE

APRIL 9-15, 2026

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

Be aware that you may not be seeing your own personal behavior or situation clearly and you may act impulsively. It is important to refrain from acting out now, as it may create unnecessary ramifications. This is an opportunity to achieve what you truly want by letting the situation unfold naturally.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

There will be a lot of mental pressure building up this week and it is best to keep your emotions private to avoid public displays of anger, as you are bound to regret any display of hostility. Take time for yourself to breath and sort out your feelings before confronting people. Be assertive not hostile.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

Prepare yourself for a rough week ahead. A lot of unstable energy is coming your way and people will likely misjudge or misinterpret the things you say. You may face some harsh criticism or unwarranted anger. It is important to be very clear and concise when talking and interacting with people at this time.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

Be careful how you deal with the people you work for and anyone in positions of power, for that matter. Don't underestimate their ability to affect your workload and life. This is the time to stay focused and do what you do naturally. Let your work and personal style be distinctive on it's own and success will follow.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

You might feel stuck and frustrated this week, as your path forward will be blocked or require alternative routes that you would prefer not to go. The choice is hard but there is an opportunity being created by this dilemma, an opportunity to build self esteem by overcoming limitations and obstacles.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

Things could get a little dicey this week as the loyalty and trust you had for someone is challenged or becomes unclear. Avoid making snap judgments or jumping to conclusions. Let things play out before confronting someone or before you cut them off. Motives and actions will not be in sync this week.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

Be aware that you may have some misunderstandings with partners or have a hard time because of a situation someone else is going through. It is important to stay neutral or even aloof and let things clear on their own. The more you react the tougher things will be. This is the time to be the strong silent type.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

Spring is here and it's time to get busy but it is important not to over do it this week as there are opposite forces pulling you in two directions. There will be a lot of pressure from coworkers and bosses to take on more work and also a lot of pressure from friends and partners to travel and have more fun.

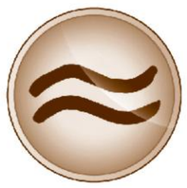
SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

This could be a tough week as you navigate some dark emotions or feelings of being betrayed. Understand that the energy coming your way is very intense but also very confusing in nature. It will be very easy to misjudge, misunderstand and act out in ways that create more uncertainty. Not the time for talking.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

Don't overreact with family or let domestic situations get you fired up, as situations could get very confusing this week. The truth may not be as evident as you would like and the feeling that there is deception could make you reactive. The truth will come to light quite naturally be patient.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



Misunderstandings and arguments are likely to occur this week, as there is an element of uncertainty and subterfuge you will be dealing with. It is important to keep your facts straight when dealing with superiors. Be prepare to make people clarify their ideas and intentions fully to avoid clashes.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

If there is any sign of the zodiac that understands letting the waters clear before interpreting, it is the fishes. This is the time to refrain from making sudden moves or making difficult choices. Wait until emotions have settled and some time has been taken to process the situation. Things are not readily apparent now.

To know your Enemy, you must become your Enemy.
— Sun Tzu

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

9					5		3	
1			3					
4			7	1				8
	8					6	7	
							8	5
	9	5			6	1		
7	6							9
					9			6
			4					

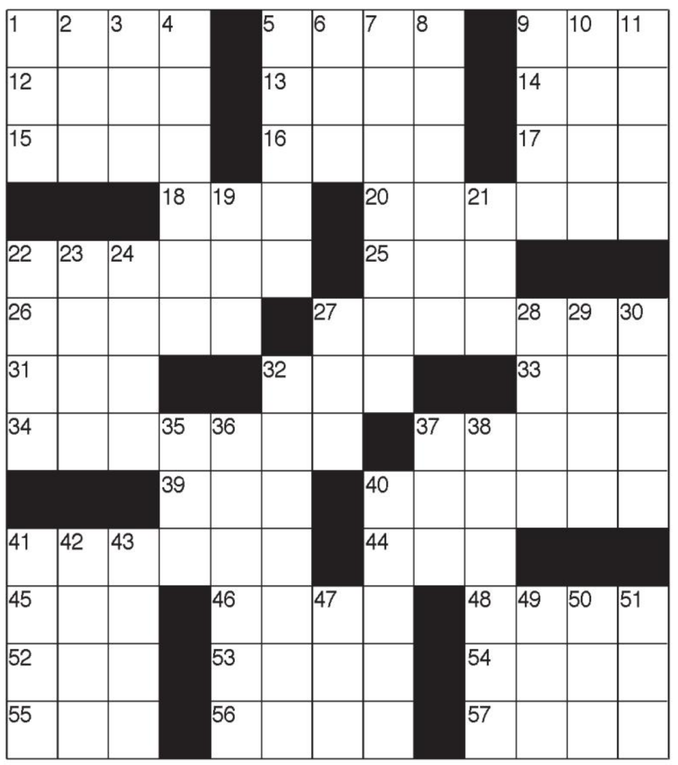
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Southeast by south (abbr.)
5 Brawl
9 Army service number (abbr.)
12 Played Hawkeye
13 Information (abbr.)
14 Portuguese coin
15 Nothing (Fr.)
16 Definitions (abbr.)
17 Automatic gain control (abbr.)
18 Afr. bowstring hemp
20 Antelope
22 Furniture wheel
25 Small Island (Brit.)
26 Frank _____ Wright, architect
27 Sympathy
31 Above (contr.)
32 Police (abbr.)
33 Be sorry
34 Enthusiasm
37 Non-PC computer brand
39 Dept. of Motor Vehicles (abbr.)
40 Slender
41 Polite address
44 Noun-forming (suf.)
45 Full of (suf.)
46 Hindustani language
48 This (Lat.)
52 Air traffic control (abbr.)
53 No (Ger.)
54 Woody's son
55 "Blue Eagle"
56 Compile
57 Attention getting sound

DOWN

1 Sons of the American Revolution
2 Hebrew judge
3 Brigade (abbr.)
4 Good mental health
5 Addition to a bill
6 Feminine (suf.)
7 Freeway exit lane
8 Send (2 words)
9 Asiatic nomad
10 Edible bulb
11 Dent
19 Nourished
21 Estimated time of arrival (abbr.)
22 Hoofbeat
23 Title of Athena
24 Divination by lots (Lat.)
27 Age
28 School course (abbr.)
29 Gigantic
30 Vintage
32 Sheltered
35 Seventh Day Adventists (abbr.)
36 Not susceptible
37 Air (pref.)
38 Perhaps
40 Rise
41 Cry
42 Star (pref.)
43 Ten (pref.)
47 Roman numeral 502
49 Arsenic (comb. form)
50 Loop trains
51 Folding bed



Teen with gun charged as adult

BY STAN MADDUX

Another teenager in Michigan City has been charged as adult for having a firearm.

La Porte County Prosecutor Sean Fagan has made it a priority for children ages 16 and 17 to face adult charges if they have at least one prior handgun related offense as a juvenile to help curb the use of guns in Michigan City.

"When you do it again, we got to do something about it," he said.

Immanuel Ford, 16, is charged in La Porte Superior Court 1 with dangerous possession of a firearm, a Level 5 felony.

According to Michigan City Police, an officer on March 27 approached Ford for walking across Michigan Boulevard without using the crosswalks.

At one point, police said Ford took off running but was eventually grabbed by officers in the area of Pearl St. and Cleveland Ave. during a foot pursuit.

Police said the loaded gun he had was recovered.

Ford is also charged with resisting law enforcement and possession of marijuana.

According to authorities, Ford's juvenile record for having a gun was from a case filed in 2025.

OBITUARIES

Rosemary Hooper
1949-2026

Rosemary Hooper, 77, of Rolling Prairie, Indiana, died peacefully, Monday, March 30, 2026, in the comfort of her family's presence.

Her life began February 16, 1949 in Indiana, born to Edward and Dorothy Burgoyne. She married John David Hooper, Sr. July 23, 1966 in Three Oaks, Michigan. After 57 years of marriage, he preceded her in death.

Rosemary was a loving homemaker and care giver. She worked at Whirlpool Corp for many years. Rosemary finished her career in childcare and volunteered many hours at Dunebrook. She loved to crochet and made many blankets, scarves and hats for every member of her family. She loved her jigsaw puzzles. Rosemary's favorite color was purple, especially her purple Escort. She was an avid Notre Dame, women's basketball, and White Sox fan. Rosemary enjoyed bird watching, looking for hummingbirds and feeding them. She enjoyed listening to Elvis. Rosemary loved to host sleepovers for her grandchildren.

Rosemary will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her daughter, Carrie (Scott) Colpitts of La Porte, Indiana; her son, John (Jennifer) Hooper, Jr., of New Carlisle, Indiana; grandchildren, Bryce (Ashley) Hooper, Madeline Hooper, Wyatt Hooper, Faith Hooper; great grandchildren, Khloe Hooper, Lily Hooper, Daisy Hooper, Julian Hooper one sister, Ruth Heckathorn of Virginia Beach, Virginia; and a host of friends and extended relatives.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her beloved husband, and two brothers Jim and Tim Burgoyne.

The Family will observe and private remembrance.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks. Please share a memory or a message online at www.wagnercares.com.

Andrew R. Vavra
1957-2026

Andrew R. Vavra, 68, of Three Oaks, passed away Friday, March 27, 2026 at Hanson Hospice Center in Stevensville due to several health issues.

Andy was born on September 11, 1957 in Michigan City, Indiana, the son of Richard and Geraldine (Pionke) Vavra. He graduated from River Valley High School and earned a degree at Michigan State University. On October 13, 1984, he married Gloria Christopher in Three Oaks, Michigan.

Andy had many jobs in his life. Among those were being a farmer, selling real estate, a Berrien County Commissioner and most recently an innkeeper at Lakeside Inn. He loved and respected everything about nature and enjoyed working in his garden and making firewood. He also liked watching classic films, traveling to Northern Michigan and walking the beach looking for stones especially Indian beads.

Andy is survived by and will be deeply missed by his wife of 41 years, Gloria; His son Stuart Vavra of Grand Rapids; His daughter Hannah (Zac) Fryling of Jenison and Grandson Oscar Fryling. Also surviving are his sisters Donna (Rich) Vavra-Musser of Stevensville, Mary Vavra and Irene Sinner of Three Oaks along with several cousins, nieces and nephews.

Andy was preceded in death by his infant daughter Emily, his parents, his sister Carol Vavra and brothers-in-law Sam Valentine and John Sinner.

The family will observe a private remembrance.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks. Please share a memory or a message online at www.wagnercares.com.

Christopher Barry Walk
1970-2026

Christopher Barry Walk, 55, of Three Oaks, died, Friday, March 27, 2026.

His life began December 18, 1970 in St. Joseph, Michigan, the eldest of two sons born to Marvon and Charlotte Walk.

Chris was a loving brother. He loved to make friends, tell a good joke, and laugh. Chris enjoyed fishing, hunting and being out in nature.

Chris will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his parents who reside in Three Oaks; his brother, Gary Walk of Three Oaks.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents.

The family will observe a private remembrance.

Chris will be laid to rest in Pine Grove Cemetery.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks. Please share a memory or a message online at www.wagnercares.com.

A Day in the Life

FEELING CHALLENGED...

BY LAWRENCE VON EBELER

What's the worst news you can ever get from your doctor? There are no alternatives. Try Cancer for openers! I have been plagued with Melanoma skin cancer for years and had to have the spots removed with a blow torch (really) which was very painful, to say the least. After several sessions of that torture I had to go for the super treatment of nuclear therapy. That entailed 15 trips to the Oncology Department at St.Joe (Corewell) hospital where the doctor and staff could not have been nicer. They always had a cup of coffee ready for me. The treatment was not painful and I was in and out very quickly. The fifteen visits were taxing for all of the time that it takes traveling back and forth from home, It almost kills a day. That was phase I. Except for one cantankerous infection, the others all cleared up except for this one spot that got infected and I had to go back one more time for that to be treated. Keep in mind that this type of Melanoma is usually not dangerous for the possibility of advancing to your insides. With that comforting knowledge I returned to Oncology for inspection and treatment for the infected spot near my ear. Dr. Gielda took one quick look and said "CANCER" and turned away clearly jarred by the revelation. I then showed him another spot of infection and he said the same thing "CANCER" and gasped again, and turned away from me clearly shaken.

While there in his office I asked him to look at another spot that was troubling me and he took one look and simply said with obvious regret, "Cancer". I did not know if he meant the Melanoma strain that is not dangerous, but for the expression on his face I knew it was the worst.

The next day I had an appointment with my regular patient consultant and it was confirmed that I had the bad cancer. She spent an hour and a half consoling me in the most gentle of ways. I left for home in an indescribable panic. I did not sleep that night, nor the next. I can't explain the panic and sorrow, that kind of news affects you. You just want to die forgetting that you're going to do just that.

After telling my brother and no one else, I have decided to be a good patient and do as they say, what else can you do? I called my dear friend and Pastor's wife, but did not tell her about my news, but didn't because the Pastor was not around. I have not spoken to Lou, my best friend about it because that would not be helpful to our peaceful friendship. That sounds odd, but I reserve some things as my right of privacy, even with close friends. In his case, I know it will be a new responsibility that I want to spare him. That is, by the way, how I feel about many in my life who care.

Back to the mundane: I had an appointment that morning with the exterminator to give me a bid on exterminating the house for those little tiny bugs that no one wants to acknowledge. I've waited three weeks for any exterminator to come and give me a bid, and today is finally the day! I have not seen anybody or gone out for three weeks, maybe four, for having friends (or anyone) to come here. The nice man came the day before yesterday and I had fallen on the floor and could not get up to answer the door. Some things never change. I ended up In St. Joe Emergency.

The nice exterminator just called and is on his way again. He doesn't know how welcome he is! He gave instructions and a nice estimate that was lower than previous estimates! But they are out of Michigan City and I need a local contractor....so back to the drawing board. I'm thinking this extermination is never going to get done and I have not left home for weeks because of it, including church, because I don't want to take any cooties in Lou's Cadillac that he bought just for taking me to church.

I did not get any acceptances for my going away party for Dr. Grentz, which means it never got posted. With all that I have on my plate maybe I should take a pass on it? It would be a lot of work and expense that I don't really need at this time in particular. But I'll do it anyway, I've got time.

I am aware of how my bad news may be inappropriate for this column. It might appear to be begging for sympathy, wrong!.... I would hate that! I only wanted to share this journey of mine, as usual, and I'm surely not begging for sympathy, or am I? That doesn't happen to be the case, on the contrary, I just want people to see that there is life after the discovery of cancer in your body. I am the same person, the same jerk, the same fun and serious loving person. I only want my friends and readers to know I am still here and the same ol' character.

Comments? Email to: larryvonroscoe@gmail.com

Dyngus Day going strong after 38 years

BY STAN MADDUX

There were plenty of alcoholic beverages and polish food served during the 38th annual Dyngus Day celebration Monday in La Porte.

Not many communities celebrate Dyngus Day, a centuries old holiday rooted in Poland to celebrate the end of Lent following Easter.

The festivities are popular in La Porte where participating tavern owners pay for charter buses to take people to the 10 bars that were on this year's route.

By 5 p.m., La Porte resident Jeff Gifford had been to seven of the bars just prior to visiting another one for a plate of pierogis.

The 64 year old Gifford said he's been taking part in the festivities every year practically since the annual celebration started.

"It's a good time," he said.

Carley Wolford, 28, also of La Porte was one of many patrons at Shooter's Bar & Grill singing Karaoke songs with people on the dance floor.

Wolford had been to four bars previously with plans to go to a few more before the festivities ended.

"It's a lot of fun to make it out and enjoy the community," she said.

Xanthe Poplawski grew up in Chicago but now lives in La Porte where she began going out for Dyngus Day in 2017.

Poplawski also sang Karaoke but cited the pickle soup at Shooter's as the main reason for making that her second stop for the evening.

"If you love pickles, you'll love the soup," she said.

Poplawski also said she likes riding the buses to the bars and the applause she received after she finished singing a song.

"I'm not in a band but just to be able to sing what I want sounds perfect," she said.

PUBLIC NOTICES

New Buffalo Area Schools (NBAS) is soliciting Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for upcoming facility improvement projects across the district. Contractors and interested vendors are invited to review project details and submit proposals by the listed deadlines.

For a full overview of the district, including project objectives and scope of work, visit: https://www.nbas.org/page/our-district

Open RFP Opportunities:
Baseball Field Concrete Work
Proposal Due: April 15, 2026 at 12:00 PM
Bid Opening: April 15, 2026 at 12:30 PM
Transportation Parking Lot Improvements
Proposal Due: April 15, 2026 at 12:00 PM
Bid Opening: April 15, 2026 at 12:30 PM
MS/HS West Parking Lot Improvements
Proposal Due: April 15, 2026 at 12:00 PM
Bid Opening: April 15, 2026 at 12:30 PM
Elementary Classroom Lighting Replacement
Proposal Due: April 16, 2026 at 12:00 PM
Bid Opening: April 16, 2026 at 12:30 PM
HS/MS Roof Replacement – Shingle Re-Roof
Proposal Due: April 17, 2026 at 12:00 PM
Bid Opening: April 17, 2026 at 12:30 PM

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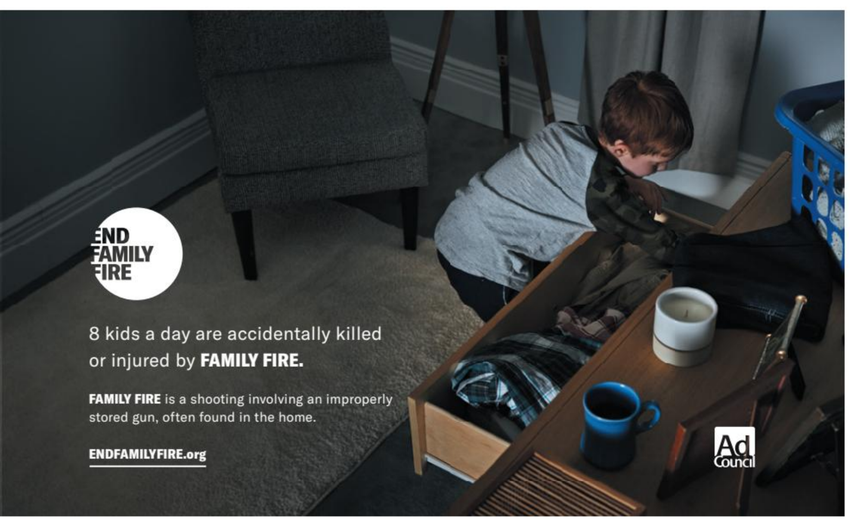
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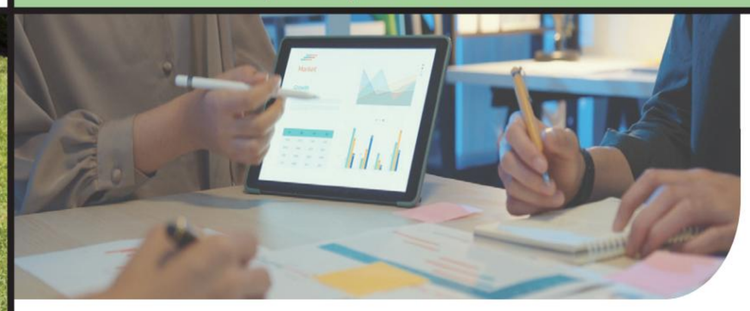

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COLUMN BY KAREN EDWARDS ND

THERE IS NO MAGIC BULLET

If what I teach on how to obtain good health was so easy, everyone would be doing it and we would all be healthy. What I teach takes responsibility, discipline, dedication and a desire to wellness. Anyone can do it, but you must choose it and be devoted to your health and wellbeing. It is not difficult. However, the Standard American Diet is so addicting with its processed sugars, dyes and chemicals. We have to want to detox from these addicting foods. Once you do, you are on the road to stay healthy. Like any addiction, it just takes that burning desire for change. Maybe you will need some support. Keep a food diary. Snack on healthy fruits. Keep addicting foods out of your home so they will not tempt you. People often snack on junk out of boredom. Keep busy.

Optimal wellness requires a comprehensive approach rather than relying on one-shot solutions like medications or even supplements. True health is achieved through lifestyle changes, including proper diet, regular exercise, and stress management, rather than relying on quick fixes. All medications come with negative side effects. If not immediate, then over time. Work with your doctor.

To reach real health, we have to utilize the Laws of Nature. This includes Correct food. Food that offers vitamins, minerals, enzymes and the life force that we need. This means ridding the processed denatured food that is proven to cause illness and disease. Eating the correct foods can be powerful at promoting health and reversing chronic illness.

Physical activity is also necessary to good health. Regular exercise is the closest thing to a "magic bullet" due to its wide-ranging metabolic and mental benefits. Our bodies are meant to move. Every cell requires oxygen, blood and nutrients to move through our body. Exercise moves blood and lymph and offers oxygen to every cell.

Consistent, quality sleep is vital for our bodies and brains to repair, rebuild, and maintain a healthy metabolism. Eight hours of sleep is what you should shoot for. Also getting to bed by 10PM is important for your immunes system to repair. The hours between 10PM and 2AM is when the immune system is most active. Hormones like melatonin peak during this time. This hormone has antioxidant properties that reduce inflammation and is crucial to our immunity. Prioritizing your sleep will benefit your overall health.

Practicing relaxation techniques help support mental health and reduces anxiety, coping skills and enhances resilience to stressful situations. Eating correctly, getting enough sleep, and exercising will help manage cortisol levels that keep our emotional and mental state of health in balance.

Maintaining positive relationships and community support is also a crucial factor in our healthcare. This gives us mental, emotional and physical well-being. Strong relationships lower inflammation, strengthen immune systems, and reduce risks of cardiovascular disease and depression, while isolation is detrimental to our health. If you are unable to be in social situations, having an animal to love and care for is also beneficial to our health.

Disclaimer: Everything here is for nutritional education and is not meant to diagnose, treat prevent or cure. See your doctor when you have questions.

PET OF THE WEEK

REMI

Meet Remi, he might be your best passenger. He loves car rides, and resting with you when not doing anything. He's pretty chill. Remi is a neutered 60 pound two-year-old, that politely knows all the basic commands. And treats, he loves his treats. He has lived with other dogs, may do well with respectful children, but he doesn't like cats. When you're not playing fetch, take a nice rest. Make Remi part of your home today.

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Superintendent Adam Bowen welcomes the crowd to the new field

Ryne Bowen, with other members of the 2005 championship team honor Brian Adamec

The crowd awaits the ribbon cutting

The ribbon is cut on the baseball field

The Red Arrow Raiders baseball team takes the field

The Red Arrow Raiders softball team takes the field

New athletic era welcomed at baseball field ribbon-cutting

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Members of the community helped "usher in a new chapter of athletics," as Superintendent Adam Bowen put it, at New Buffalo Area Schools as they watched the ribbon be cut on the new baseball field at New Buffalo Middle/High School Tuesday, April 7.

"Today is the celebration of the mission of every student, every day and working together to provide top notch facilities for our student athletes to enjoy for many years to come," Bowen said.

This marks the first year that New Buffalo and River Valley are hitting the field as a team due to the two schools combining as the Red Arrow Raiders for baseball.

Both the baseball team and softball team, the latter of which had been one of the first combinations when the schools started merging sports a few years back, were playing against Benton Harbor.

Bowen thanked their "strong community partnerships:" New Buffalo Area Recreation Authority and the City of New Buffalo, Tom Rowland, vice president of the New Buffalo Community Education Foundation and Brian Williams, secretary; Vannessa Thun, who organized the ceremony, and the New Buffalo Area Schools Board of Education.

Weather is no longer a factor with artificial turf infields, which increases the "opportunities for our youth programs and high school teams to be on the field."

The final steps of the softball field, which include the awarding of state grants, are being worked through, as well as final touches to the baseball field, such as the dugouts being built by the Building Trades students.

Calling that day's celebration "just the beginning," Rowland said that an announcement will hopefully be made in the next few weeks that a summer college baseball team could play up to 32 plus games per summer on the field.

When that happens, we're going to continue to invest in the infrastructure, the seating the stands and lights for this field – it's going to be a beautiful place not only for the school but for the community to gather and enjoy our national pastime," he said.

New Buffalo High School Principal Tracy Ripley said that the celebration of "new beginnings" for the school district's athletics warranted recognition for how they arrived there.

"I think it's very important for us to pause and reflect on where we come from and who has helped pave the way for this exciting new phase in New Buffalo and Three Oaks sports," she said.

She welcomed the celebration's special guests: the 2005 state basketball championship team.

Teammates Ryne Bowen, Wayne Taylor, Connor Lijewski, Jake Earley, Jordan Topinka, PA Tierney and Matt Fix stood on the field and paid tribute to the one teammate who was missing: Brian Adamac, who recently passed away at age 39.

The only son of Jan and the late Richard "Dick" Adamec, Brian was a 2006 graduate of New Buffalo and was the pitcher of the 2005 state championship baseball game.

Upon graduation, Brian served as a staff sergeant in the United States Army, where he became a highly decorated soldier: He received an Army Accommodation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Superior Unit Award, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two Campaign Stars and Valorous Unit Award "for his extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy from 2011-2012."

When home on leave, Brian would stop by the school to check with teachers, coaches and administrators to reminisce about "his days playing baseball in New Buffalo with his fans, friends and his teammates."

"My hope is that every time we step foot on these beautiful new fields, we take a moment to remember Brian and his amazing career as starting pitcher for our state championship team but more importantly, as a loving son, friend, teammate and decorated Army veteran," Ripley said.

Ryne Bowen read a message from Wayne Tremblay, who coached the 2005 team: "Brian mattered to his teammates, he mattered to me and he mattered to everyone who knew him…Please honor Brian's memory by being more aware and compassionate - make a commitment to always be looking out for one another, we're all that we have."

The first pitch was thrown out in honor of Brian.

"One pitch, but a ripple in time for the loving memories of our teammate, our friend and our brother – we love you," Ryne said.

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